

Court dismisses suit against police chief

The Register

A lawsuit against the Newport Beach police chief was dismissed Friday in Small Claims Court when the leader of an environmental group who filed the suit failed to attend a hearing.

The suit, filed by International Green Party leader Randy Toler, claimed that the Police Department had hampered a recent fund-raiser held by the group and that Police Chief Charles Gross was harassing Toler. The suit sought \$700 from Gross.

When Toler failed to appear at the hearing, held at Orange County Harbor Municipal Court, Commissioner Richard Sullivan dismissed the case.

Reached in Connecticut Friday afternoon, Toler said he was upset that the court did not grant his request to delay the hearing. Toler said he planned to file another suit against the police chief.

Gross called Toler's lawsuit a "waste of taxpayers' money" and said Toler might have been seeking publicity.

Toler said he was one of the founders of the International Green Party in 1973 in Niles, Mich., and has been instrumental in the growth of the American branch of the organization. The group is an offshoot of the Green party, which has been active in Europe.

Toler claimed that the group's fund-raising activities were hampered during a May 21 political meeting at Toler's house. Toler contends that two police cars were parked outside during the evening and that two police officers warned him that if the event became unruly or if alcohol was served to minors, police would break it up.

Gross disputes Toler's version of the story. The chief said only one officer had gone to the party, warned the group not to serve minors and left.